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RUEHCD/AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ 0186
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 0187
RUEHSO/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO 0194

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 LAGOS 000188

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR AF/W
STATE FOR INR/AA
WARSAW FOR LISA PIASCIK
CIUDAD JUAREZ FOR DONNA BLAIR
ISTANBUL FOR TASHAWNA SMITH
SAO PAULO FOR ANDREW WITHERSPOON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/11/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: OYO FORECAST: VIOLENCE AND VOTING MANIPULATION
LIKELY

REF: 06 LAGOS 1436

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Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for reasons 1.4 (b and d)

¶1. (C) Summary: A January visit by Poloff to Oyo State showed the return of Rashidi Ladoja to the governor's seat had further complicated the political climate of the State. People's Democratic Party (PDP) strongman Lamidi Adedibu and his ally Deputy Governor Christopher Alao-Akala continue to defy the Governor and behave as they want, as evidenced by the discovery of six voter registration machines illegally located in Adedibu's home. Adedibu's control over the People's Democratic Party (PDP) has led to defections, but the opposition continued to be divided and will probably field multiple challengers. Ladoja, whom the opposition has courted assiduously, remained in the PDP out of fear of presidential retribution. End summary.

Akala's Only Accomplishment: Loot Oyo State Treasury

¶2. (U) Poloff's visit to Ibadan on January 18 showed the city moving at a slower-than-normal pace, with long fuel queues due to the fuel crisis. The ring road in Ibadan, which Poloff had seen in September 2006, had been completed only after Rashidi Ladoja returned as Governor, following a court case ordering his reinstatement.

¶3. (C) Professor Adeolu Durotoye of the University of Ibadan called the conspiratorial relationship between Deputy Governor Christopher Alao-Akala and his political patron Lamidi Adedibu not unusual for Nigerian politics, but unusual for the "naked and crude" way it plays out in Oyo. The problem, according to Durotoye, was Adedibu had become the de facto governor and was stronger and more visible than Governor Ladoja.

¶4. (C) S.A. Oladiti, an Ibadan fuel importer, told Poloff that undue influence as exemplified by Lamidi Adedibu was the biggest political issue in Oyo State. Referring to Deputy Governor Christopher Alao-Akala, Oladiti said during his eleven months as Governor, Akala's only accomplishment was to

loot the treasury. Oladiti described Oyo politics as tense, with many politicians and their partisans now resolved to carrying weapons.

¶5. (U) In January, Adedibu was caught with six Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) registration machines in his home. So far there has been no prosecution of Adedibu. Most recently, Adedibu and Ladoja partisans clashed at the February 3 Southwest PDP rally in Akure, where party elders declared Akala the party's flagbearer in Oyo.

Akala Wins Bidding War for Adedibu's Patronage

¶6. (C) Adedibu's favor does not come cheaply. Prior to the PDP primary, perennial gubernatorial candidate Yekeen Adejo lost a bidding war against Akala for Adedibu's patronage. After his loss, Adejo attempted to stack the primary caucus by ferrying 7,000 delegates to the venue but Adedibu forces prohibited the delegates from entering the stadium. Once Adejo was stopped, Akala's nomination was a fait accompli. A bitter Adejo told Polspec that after the divisive primary Oyo would certainly be a problem for the PDP in the general election.

¶7. (C) According to Durotoye, Akala has learned not to defy Adedibu and has given him everything he has asked for. Akala gave Adedibu a share of the monthly security fund of 500 million naira (approximately \$3.9 million), a share of all construction contracts, and numerous gifts during his governorship. After the PDP primary, Akala presented Adedibu another gift of 500 million naira, Durotoye said.

¶8. (C) During Akala's tenure, Adedibu's construction firm renovated Mapo Hall, a civic center in Ibadan, for 350

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million naira (approximately \$2.7 million), which Oladiti stated was well above the actual costs of the renovation. When a major road linking Ibadan and Abeokuta came up for bidding, potential contractors were instructed not to bother because Adedibu would win it.

¶9. (C) However, all is not perfect in this marriage of convenience. Adedibu is Muslim, and Akala Christian, which Durotoye said provides some conflict. Furthermore, Akala is from Ogbomosho and not Ibadan, and the city generally considers the governorship the right of an Ibadan indigene. One Adedibu aide said he would not support Akala, according to Durotoye.

Ladoja in a Quandary

¶10. (C) Ladoja could be a formidable opponent, but Akala already has the PDP nomination. Ibadan journalist Wale Ojo-Lanre told Poloff that President Obasanjo has instructed Ladoja to publicly support Akala. Ladoja unsurprisingly demurred, but has remained in the PDP despite persistent rumors of a possible move to the Labor Party (LP). Ladoja's continued residence in the PDP is more a function of fear than loyalty. He is concerned about incurring President Obasanjo's wrath as the President is the force that somewhat moderates Adedibu's quest to destroy Ladoja.

AC Turns Away from Ladoja to Adedibu

¶11. (U) The Action Congress (AC) tried to court Ladoja for awhile. Lagos Governor Bola Tinubu, the prime mover behind the AC, and Ladoja had been close since the two were both senators. Tinubu assisted Ladoja in his fight to regain the governorship. Upon finding Ladoja to be an unwilling bride,

the AC in Oyo divided into two factions. The first faction, led by former Lagos Commissioner of Planning Ismail Adewusi, is supported by Tinubu.

¶12. (C) The second faction, led by former Governor Lam Adesina, secured the AC nomination for Taoheed Adedoja. Adedoja served as Chairman of the State Universal Education Board under Ladoja before switching to the AC. According to Durotoye, Adedoja has close ties to Adedibu, and in fact visited Adedibu on the night he switched parties. Adedibu reportedly assured Adedoja that he would always be welcome in his home. While Adedibu supports Akala overtly, Durotoye suspected Adedibu provides Adedoja behind-the-scenes support.

¶13. (C) In a meeting with Consulate officers, Adedoja touted his U.S. Doctorate in Education and discussed the importance of Bola Ige's legacy. Adedoja said the Oyo AC was the only party in the State which did not split up after primaries, and managed to keep its unity.

¶14. (U) The only other candidate with an outside chance of affecting the outcome is All-Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) candidate Senator Isiaka Ajimobi, formerly of the Alliance for Democracy (AD). While Ajimobi claims some support, the ANPP does not have the grassroots base of the PDP and AC in Oyo.

Comment

¶15. (C) Notwithstanding Ladoja's return as governor, Adedibu remains the captain of Oyo politics. Ibadan is the second largest city in the Southwest and is considered the heart of Yorubaland by many. Thus what happens there is important to the rest of the Southwest. Adedibu clearly controls the PDP candidate and has strong influence with the AC candidate. No matter who wins the election, Adedibu will profit. Nevertheless, his profit will be larger if the PDP wins. However, among the general populace, Akala is not popular nor

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is Adedibu for that matter. The opposition thinks it has a chance and the competition will be tight for personal animosity will reinforce the political competition. Pre and post-election violence is possible. The Oyo election will be a tough, hot affair, but the PDP is likely to prevail in both the gubernatorial as well as presidential vote counts. End comment.

BROWNE